

September 28, 2006

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

The Personnel Committee met Thursday, September 28, 2006 at 4:00 p.m., in the QC Meeting Room, Third Floor, County Administration Building, 215 East Central, Bentonville

Committee Members Present: Harrison, Hill, Sheridan, Stephenson, Tharp, Wolfe

Others Present: JP Burton Schindler, Barb Ludwig

Media: Jennifer Turner – Benton County Daily Record

Chair Robert Stephenson called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request for Waiver of Policy Concerning Hire-in Rate

A. Department 05 – Supervisor – Auto Maintenance

Human Resources Director Barbara Ludwig stated that the two items on the agenda today will go through the approval process during the month of October, and will not be considered as 2007 Budget requests. She stated that the Sheriff's Department hired an Auto Maintenance Supervisor in at the 90% rate, and they are asking for a waiver to raise him to the mid-point of the salary range, with no grade change. She said he has been the Auto Shop Supervisor for the Arkansas State Police for 10 years, and while in that position received several letters of commendation and implemented a cost reduction program which reduced their maintenance costs from 22 to 6 cents per mile. She said he also has several vehicle repair certifications from Ford Motor Company. JP Stephenson asked for the specific dollar impact. Barbara Ludwig stated that the 90% rate is \$13.01 per hour, and they are asking for a waiver to pay him \$14.45 per hour. She said that there has been a high turnover rate in this position, and believes that it is due to the salary. JP Wolf asked how long the previous Supervisor was in the position, and what his pay rate was. Barbara Ludwig stated that the last person in this position was employed for 6 months at \$12.99 per hour. She added that it is a competitive market, and it is getting harder and harder to keep this job filled. She stated that the impact on the 2006 Budget would be \$1,051, including benefits, and the impact on the 2007 Budget would be \$3,036, which also includes benefits. She said they are also asking that the increase be made retroactive to his hire date. JP Wolf made motion to approve and forward to the October 3 Finance Committee meeting a request to grant a waiver of policy to set the pay rate for the Sheriff's Department Auto Maintenance Supervisor at the mid-point range, and that the pay rate be made retroactive to the hire date of August 11, 2006, seconded by JP Harrison. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. Request for Waiver of Policy Concerning Promotion Rate

A. Department 07 – GIS Project Manager

Barbara Ludwig stated that the salary for this position was already approved when the position was added in August. She said that an internal candidate has been hired, so a waiver in policy is being requested in order to hire the person at the 90% rate. JP Stephenson stated that this is the age-old dilemma of not being able to hire from within at the same rate a new hire would receive. JP Sheridan asked what the monetary impact would be. Barbara Ludwig stated that the 2006 Budget impact would be \$2,969, and the hire-in rate is \$50,099. JP Sheridan made motion to approve and forward to the October 3, 2006 Finance Committee a request to grant a waiver of policy to allow a hire-in rate at 90% for the GIS Project Manager position, seconded by JP Wolf. Motion passed, 5 yeas, 1 abstention (Tharp).

OTHER BUSINESS:

Barbara Ludwig stated that she is finalizing a list of personnel requests and reorganizations for 2007 Budget consideration, and the Personnel Committee will review them at the next meeting which is October 11 at 3:00 p.m. She said that she will make sure that all Elected Official and Department Heads who are making requests will be at the meeting in order to answer questions. She said that they will prioritize the list as they have done at previous meetings. JP Wolf asked how many positions are new. Barbara Ludwig stated that there are about 8 new positions being requested, and they are looking at forming a pool of floating employees that could fill in at all of the offices during vacations and illnesses. JP Tharp stated that it is frustrating to him when requests are made and it seems like the person making the request has not done their homework so the justification does not seem to be there. JP Stephenson stated that they will need to know why the position is needed, such as how many apples a day the person will be picking up, and why we have more apples to pick up now than we did six months ago. JP Wolf stated that she would like to see the information in as simple a format as possible. Barbara Ludwig stated that they would look at three categories—reorganizations, replacing existing positions, and new positions.

Barbara Ludwig stated that she and Benefits Administrator Thomas Dunlap had visited Camden County, Georgia, and toured their on-site clinic which is staffed by an Industrial Nurse. She added that their Worker's Comp program is self-supporting, but that Arkansas laws do not allow it. She said they have talked with one of the local hospital groups and are investigating the possibility of pairing up with another company to start a clinic which would save money for the Health Fund, and possibly Worker's Comp costs. She also noted that 24 employees had attended a Smoking Cessation Workshop sponsored by the County.

JP Hill stated that they should contact legislators to sponsor a change in the Worker's Comp law. Barbara Ludwig stated that she could understand how the current law helps smaller counties. JP Stephenson stated that perhaps the Legislature would be willing to change the law for larger counties. JP Hill asked if they could see a Power Point presentation relevant to this issue. Barbara Ludwig stated that are looking at their current premium costs and claims paid, and she will get the information to them.

After motion and second the meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.